



WINE COMMUNICATORS
OF AUSTRALIA
PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN WINE

Media Release

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KATHLEEN QUEALY NAMED WCA LEGEND OF THE VINE

Kathleen Quealy grew up in an era where young girls grew up to be nurses or teacher. Not winemakers. She has shaped her wine career in her own vision, not conforming to the accepted wisdom of the day and has become a lightning rod of change. And that, as much as anything, says why this woman is today named Legend of the Vine.

The first female to have this honour bestowed on them, Kathleen has never backed down or taken rubbish from anyone. She released the first unwooded chardonnay in the country in 1990 and was dubbed the “Queen of Pinot Grigio” by James Halliday not long after founding T’Gallant on the Mornington Peninsula.

In an article for Wine Titles Kathleen said “I was surprised by the immediate condemnation the variety met within various sectors of the local wine industry. It stood in contrast to the instant acceptance of the wine by both the customer and the wine press. There was a professional belief that Pinot Gris was not a premium grape variety and therefore had limited potential.”

And it’s that courage of her convictions to do what she believes in – not just what is popular – that has defined her career thus far.

Kathleen started her love of wine working on the bottling line for McWilliams in the late 70s as an after school job. Her parents firmly believing she would pursue a career of the day, were shocked when instead of enrolling in nursing or teaching she bought herself a scooter and took off to winemaking school in Wagga Wagga.

It was there she met life long mentor and Pinot Gris advocate Max Loader. Max saw the courage and vision in Kathleen, and took her under his wing. She was nicknamed “Horror” at University because as she refused to ever back down, for anything or anyone, she believed in.

Kathleen started as winemaker at Bungawarra in 1984, in addition to vineyard manager and bee keeper and in 1986 she became the first female to win a trophy at the Brisbane Wine Show.

T’Gallant was sold to Treasury Wine Estates in 2003 and Kathleen and Kevin purchased Balnarring Vineyard. Kathleen then started Quealy Winemakers, in 2006 launching with just two wines Pobblebonk (white blend), Rageous (red blend) plus a Pinot Noir and a Pinot Gris as a passing nod to convention.

She’s been on and off the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association on several occasions, re-joining the committee most recently in 2015 where she is particularly vocal about protecting the region from Phylloxera, promoting (and protecting) Mornington Peninsula Pinot G, and anything else disruptive she can think of.

Kathleen remains a stalwart supporter of diversity, independence and merit recognition across the industry and will continue to do whatever the bloody hell she thinks is right on any given day.

As a *Legend of the Vine*, Kathleen joins a prestigious list that includes WCA Patron James Halliday, Rob Hirst, Patrick Iland, David Lowe, Phil Laffer, Chris Anstee, Ross Brown, Colin Campbell, Iain Riggs and Bill Hardy. She also becomes a life member of WCA.



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Wine Communicators of Australia was established as a national not-for-profit company in December 2010 growing out of the well-respected Wine Press Clubs of NSW, Victoria and South Australia. It aims to be Australia's pre-eminent organisation connecting business professionals working with wine and currently has more than 500 members.

WCA's annual program includes networking events, webinars and its prestigious lunches in association with three major capital city wine shows – Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. It also runs the annual Wine Communicator Awards and Legend of the Vine Awards.

For media enquiries or additional images from the lunch contact WCA Executive Office,
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